

Rumple Schmumple was a finalist in the 2003 Kennedy Center/ACTF National Ten-Minute Play Festival and premiered at Dad's Garage Theatre Company in Atlanta, Ga. It was directed by Sean Daniels, and featured Alison Hastings and Geoff Uterhardt. It also received a Write Angle Productions Ten-Minute Play Award in 2003.

CHARACTERS

QUEEN: A queen.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN: A funny-looking little man.

SETTING: A royal nursery room in a tall tower.

TIME: A long time ago.

RUMPLE SCHMUMPLE

AT THE CURTAIN: *The QUEEN is guessing.*

QUEEN. Are you Carl?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Shifty?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Needle Nose Pliers?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Philomena?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Randy?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Rumplestiltskin?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. What?

QUEEN. Forget it, that's a dumb one. Betharina?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Bethlehem?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Bethanphetamine?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Gee, this is hard. Give me a hint.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Come on.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Forget it.

QUEEN. Okay, fine. I give up. Here. *(Hands the baby over to RUMPLESTILTSKIN.)* She needs feeding every

two hours. I've already pumped, so she's set for the next day or so, but then you'll have to switch to formula. Cloth diapers give her a rash, so I use disposable. I know, it's hard on the environment, but tough rocks, I have a life, you know?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Uh...

QUEEN. Be sure to give her a good burping after meals too. Spit-up is inevitable, so if I were you, I'd invest in some good washable knitwear.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Wait.

QUEEN. She can't go anywhere without her blankie, or she makes the most ear-splitting noise. Also, she's a biter.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Wait! Don't you want to guess some more?

QUEEN. No, I told you, I give up. Take her talking Elmo doll. She's not that attached to it, but it drives me crazy, so you might as well.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You're supposed to keep guessing, remember? I spin straw into gold, you promise first-born baby, I give you name-guessing loophole. That was the agreement.

QUEEN. What's it been, three days? I know when I'm licked. Here's the bottle sanitizer, and her pacifier. It's shaped like a lady's nipple!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Slow down. Let's think about this. QUEEN. She's got some books that make animal noises somewhere...

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You don't want to do this.

QUEEN. Yes, I do. Fair's fair.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No, it isn't. This is your firstborn baby.

QUEEN. I'll have another.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No, you won't.

QUEEN. Are you questioning my right to reproduce?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. That's not what I meant.

QUEEN. Keep your laws off my body!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I just meant, this baby is special to you. She's irreplaceable.

QUEEN. You know what else is irreplaceable? Eight hours of sleep at night. Can't wait.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. What kind of mother are you?

QUEEN. Look. I was young, I made some rash decisions. You're providing me an opportunity to make things right. Not that I have to justify my actions to you. And how dare you pass judgment on my mothering.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I am going to eat your baby. I am going to take her, hang her from a tree, skin her, and cook her. Then I am going to eat her. Her cries of pain will echo throughout these hills and only add delicious ambiance to my cooking and eating of her. And you are telling me this is okay with you?

QUEEN. Well, it's not my first choice. But what are you gonna do?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You fight! You—you keep guessing!

QUEEN. Hey, maybe you haven't noticed, but His Majesty is like, eighty thousand years old. Somebody has to keep an eye on the economy. (*Shift.*) Is it so wrong to want to establish my career before I get tied down with raising kids? Don't I owe it to my kids to be emotionally balanced as a person before I bring them into this world? Isn't it better for my kids that way? Maybe not this kid.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. What about your biological clock?
QUEEN. You don't know the first thing about my clock.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Statistics show—

QUEEN. I know what the statistics show.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You'll be forty and pining for your baby. Lost and miserable.

QUEEN. Are you insinuating that I can't be happy if I don't have a child?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You have a child!

QUEEN. My child, my clock, my choice. Now take the little darling and get out.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You know what? You really did guess my name. Earlier. You guessed it, and I pretended you didn't.

QUEEN. Oh. This is so sad.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I'm serious.

QUEEN. Really, this is pathetic. The lengths you will go... Does fatherhood scare you that badly?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I'm not going to be the father! I'm going to be the eater! I mean I'm not. You're confusing me.

QUEEN. I know having a child is a terrible adjustment. Let me give you some advice. Go outside, light a small fire—

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. It's raining.

QUEEN. Light a small fire in the rain, center yourself, wrap my little pumpkin in some aluminum foil, throw her in the coals there, and think about the future.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. My name really is Rumpelstiltskin!

QUEEN. Whatever we have to tell ourselves. Now, do you have everything? You can call me if there's something I've forgotten.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Forget it. I won't take her.

QUEEN. Yes, you will.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You're crazy, I'm not dealing with you. I demand to see your supervisor.

QUEEN. I'm the queen.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. The king, then.

QUEEN. You think the king is my supervisor?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Oh, dear Lord.

QUEEN. What kind of backwater chauvinism—

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Stop it! Enough! You're going to make me— *(Beat. A thought.)* You're bluffing.

QUEEN. What?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. This is a ruse. You're trying to trick me.

QUEEN. I don't know what you're talking about.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You're trying to get me to leave the baby here.

QUEEN. No, I'm not.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Oh, ho! And I almost fell for it, too. Sneaky! Very sneaky. But not sneaky enough!

QUEEN. Whatever. Are you going?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I am going. And I am taking your baby.

QUEEN. Fine. *(Beat.)*

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Here I go.

QUEEN. Okay.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I'm going to eat her up.

QUEEN. Can't wait. *(Beat.)*

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You're bluffing. I know you're bluffing.

QUEEN. Look, you don't believe me? Give me the baby.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Aha!

QUEEN. I'll cook her.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Come again?

QUEEN. I'll make you a nice take-out meal. How do you like her? Barbequed? Broiled? It's been a while since I've been in the kitchen.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN (*aghas!*). You're unbelievable!

QUEEN. Oh, you can cook her because you're some baby-eating demon creature, but because I'm her mother, I can't?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Finally, you're making sense.

QUEEN (*sighs*). Such a double standard. Give me that baby.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I will not.

QUEEN. Don't be such a priss. Give it.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. No.

QUEEN. Come on.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Get your hands off!

QUEEN. Let me cook my baby!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Under no circumstances.

QUEEN. First you want me to keep her, now you won't give her to me.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I don't trust you to take care of her.

QUEEN. Like you'd do such a great job.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Better than you!

QUEEN. Ha, ha, ha! Delusions of grandeur from such a tiny man.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I could be a very good parent.

QUEEN. You and what army? Being a parent requires skills and finesse. You gotta bring home the bacon *and* fry it up in a pan.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You think you're better than me?

Okay. Prove it. Prove you're a good mother, and I'll give you the baby.

QUEEN. Who do you think you are? I don't have to submit to your authority or anybody else's.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Fine. I'll just take her home with me, where I'll dress her in frilly pink dresses—

QUEEN. Fine.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. —and make her play with Barbies.

QUEEN (*horrified gasp*). You wouldn't dare!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. I'll saddle her with some nice body-image problems. "I hate math, let's go shopping!"

QUEEN. That is too cruel, even for you! How could you stoop so low?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Face it, lady. I'm wicked. Now start singin', or the kid gets a subscription to *Cosmo*.

QUEEN. Okay, okay, okay! I love my baby. I wanna kiss her little face off.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. Not helping!

QUEEN. She's the greatest, she's the best!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. More...

QUEEN. She is my sun and my moon, and I'd die a thousand deaths if any harm were to befall my child!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN (*grudgingly hands over the baby*). That's better.

QUEEN. Pig.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN. You know, it's women like you that make it so we can't trust you. You get into these messes and then go looking for handouts from magical

creatures. Let this be a lesson to you, young lady!
Don't mess with the magic man, because I am strong
and invincible and know no weakness! (*Disappears.*
Reappears.) I'm keeping the pacifier. (*Disappears.*)

END OF PLAY